

Physical Activity with Diabetes

Being physically active leads to greater strength, flexibility, and endurance. Physical activity also helps you feel better both physically and mentally.

- For people with diabetes, being physically active will:
 - improve blood glucose control and increase insulin sensitivity
 - lower blood pressure if currently elevated
 - raise HDL (good cholesterol) and lower LDL (bad cholesterol) and triglycerides
 - help reduce the need for diabetes medicines
 - help lose weight or maintain a healthy weight
 - lower the risk of developing other health problems
 - increase energy and allow for better sleep
 - help you manage stressful situations better
 - build muscle and strengthen bones (decrease risk of osteoporosis)

General Recommendations:

- It is recommended that people with diabetes participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity each week. The more activity that a person gets in a week will result in greater health benefits
 - Children and adolescents need at least 60 minutes most days of the week
- Discuss physical activity with your health care team before starting a routine
- Choose activities that you enjoy and make a plan including goals.
 - Start by stretching and begin slow but the activity should be challenging
- Make sure you wear clothing appropriate for the activity. Wear cotton socks and comfortable, well-fitting shoes designed for the activity you are doing.
- Learn how your blood glucose responds to physical activity. Check blood glucose before and after activity
 - If you take diabetes medicines that can cause low blood glucose, ask your health care team whether you should change the amount you take before you physical activity
 - If your blood glucose level is below 100 before you begin activity, have a snack
 - Always have a snack or glucose tablets nearby during activity to treat low blood glucose
- Carry a medical ID or inform those who are with you that you have diabetes
- Check your feet often for cuts, sores, red spots, swelling, and infected toenails.
- Track your progress

Cautions:

- Some forms of physical activity can make diabetes complications worse
 - Exertion from weight lifting may cause increased pressure in blood vessels of the eyes
 - Because of numbness from nerve damage in the feet, you may not notice sores or blisters, which if left unattended, may result in serious complications or amputation
- Treating Low Blood Glucose:
 - If your blood glucose is below 70, have one of the following right away:
 - 3 or 4 glucose tablets
 - 1 serving of glucose gel—the amount equal to 15 grams of carbohydrate
 - 1/2 cup (4 ounces) of any fruit juice
 - 1/2 cup (4 ounces) of a regular—not diet—soft drink
 - 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk
 - 5 or 6 pieces of hard candy
 - 1 tablespoon of sugar or honey
 - After 15 minutes, check your blood glucose again. If it's still too low, have another serving. Repeat until your blood glucose is 70 or higher. If it will be an hour or more before your next meal, have a snack as well.